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SURVEY OF USSR AGRICULTURE FOR 1949

[Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

Socialist agriculture, despite the huge losses suffered during the war and the severe drought of 1946, is steadily progressing. The kolkhoz system has grown stronger and products of farming and livestock raising have increased. During the past 2 years the sowing area expanded by 20 million hectares.

The gross grain harvest in 1948 was 7 billion pud, only slightly below the prewar 1940 level; the average yield of grain crops from one hectare exceeded the prewar level. In 1949, the gross grain-crop harvest was 7.6 billion pud, which is almost the level of output set by the Five-Year Plan for 1950. As a result of the successful solution of grain-raising problems, conditions were created for a steady growth of industrial crop harvests and for the development of livestock raising. In 1949, the harvests of cotton, flax, sunflowers, and potatoes considerably exceeded the 1940 prewar level for industrial crops.

In 1949, kolkhozes received three to four times more tractors, automobiles, and agricultural machines than in 1940. In 1940, only the preparation of the soil, sowing, and the harvesting of grain crops was done by machines, but now many other agricultural processes are mechanized.

MTS are steadily improving their operations and are the most important means for expanding agriculture. During 1949, MTS worked 40 million more hectares of kolkhoz land than in 1940.

Electrification of agricultural work is also expanding rapidly. Ten times as many kolkhozes were electrified in 1949 as in 1940. The mechanization and electrification of agriculture is converting agricultural labor into a form of industrial labor, and thus helping to eliminate the differences which exist between the city and the country. At present over 82 percent of all spring plowing and fallow plowing is mechanized and nearly half the grain crop is harvested by combines.

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In 1949, considerable progress was made in fulfilling the 3-year plan for the development of livestock raising. Thousands of new kolkhoz farms for cattle, sheep, hog, and poultry raising were organized. The prewar production level of cattle, sheep, and goats is now being surpassed by kolkhozes.

Under the postwar Five-Year Plan, socialist agriculture has progressed successfully in providing stable and high harvests. The plan for shelter-belt tree planting, the introduction of grass-field rotation, and construction of ponds, and reservoirs in steppe and forest steppe areas of European USSR have been carried out according to agronomical science. The 1949 plan for tree planting by kolkhozes and sovkhozes was doubled. In the steppes and forest steppes of European USSR, shelter-belt tree planting covered a general area of 590,000 hectares, and 800,000 hectares of soil were prepared for future tree planting.(1)

Much work is being done on the planting of perennial fruit and berry plants. Progress has already been made in growing perennial rye. The first perennial rye to be grown in the Donbass was planted in 1948 on the Sovkhoz imeni Oktyabr'skaya Revolutsiya. Perennial rye, which was discovered by Academician A. I. Derzhavin, produces a harvest for several consecutive years without being replanted.

In the spring of 1950, perennial rye was grown in other sovkhozes. The rye was sown last fall from seeds harvested in the Sovkhoz imeni Oktyabr'skaya Revolutsiya. In Stalino Oblast, over 400 hectares of perennial rye have now been sown.(2)

New and hardier varieties of vegetables are being successfully cultivated in the Far East. For example, the agricultural meteorological station in Bakuriani village, which has been in existence for over 10 years, is attempting to produce frost-resistant varieties of vegetables for kolkhozes in the high mountain zone. Cabbage, string beans, carrots, and radishes produced on experimental fields at the station are now being successfully cultivated on the kolkhozes in Bakuriani.

A large harvest of vegetables was obtained in 1949. The yield per hectare was 1,400 centners for cabbage, 450 centners for beets, 350 centners for carrots, 300-340 centners for potatoes.(3)

Similarly, sweet potatoes have been successfully introduced not only in the subtropical areas but also in the eastern parts of Georgian SSR (Tbilisskiy, Gardabanskiy, Khobskiy, and other rayons). Besides serving as food, sweet potatoes are used for industrial purposes. Starch, flour, sugar, and alcohol are manufactured from them, and sweet-potato syrup is used by the confectionery industry.(4)

Progress has also been made in developing new cotton-raising areas. On 5 January, a meeting was held by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences USSR, under the leadership of Academician S. I. Vavilov. At that time, means for raising cotton in fields along the Amu-Dar'ya and the Syr-Darya rivers were discussed by P. A. Letunov, head of the Aral-Caspian expedition. The expedition, organized in 1947, is investigating the problems connected with further expansion of cotton raising. It is studying the extremely important questions of increasing the cotton harvest on existing irrigated lands and working out measures to utilize new water resources and land. As a result, scientific bases to protect the irrigated lands of Central Asia from dry winds have been set up, and measures for establishing sands and improving the pasture area for livestock raising have been worked out.

The problems on which the expedition is working are of great importance to the national economy. In 1950, the scope of the work being done by the expedition is to be increased and new and important tasks will be given to it.(5)

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Significant results have also been obtained in the field of selective seeding as a result of the close cooperation between the All-Union Institute of Plant Cultivation in Leningrad and the Scientific Institute of the People's Democracies. Recently, the Leningrad Institute received from Czechoslovakia valuable seed material and several new varieties of potatoes developed there by botanists and seed-selection experts. It also received a large quantity of seed samples of grains and garden crops from Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria. In exchange, the institute sent seed samples to various agricultural crop scientific research institutes of the People's Democracies.(6)

Scientific institutions are also helping to raise the productivity of livestock. The Ministry of Agriculture is establishing new research institutes to work on livestock raising, veterinary science, and feed procurements. In Saratov Oblast, for example, the Experimental Station for Livestock is being reorganized. Beginning 1 January 1950, it will be called the Southwest Zonal Scientific Research Institute for Livestock and Feed Procurement. A Siberian Zonal Institute is being erected in Omsk and a Far Eastern Zonal Scientific Research Veterinary Institute in Blagoveshchensk.

During 1949-50, livestock-raising departments are to be organized at the Irkutsk and Kursk Agricultural Experimental Stations, the Kaluga, Pensa, and Mariyets Experimental Stations for Farming, and the Kemerovo, Shatilovka, Morshansk, and Chuvash State Breeding Stations.(7)

As the 3-year plan for the development of livestock raising nears completion, kolkhozes, and sovkhozes of Issuk-Kul' Oblast, Kirgiz SSR, are making better use of mountain pastures. At present, $1\frac{1}{2}$ times more livestock winter in the bog zones than did last year. Hundreds of thousands of sheep and horses graze annually on more than 100 kolkhozes and sovkhozes of Dzhety-Oguzskiy, Novo-Voznesenovskiy, and Tonskiy rayons.

Extra food is stored for the livestock in case of temporary bad weather. Shepherds and horse wranglers, who tend the livestock, and a large group of zoological technicians, veterinary doctors, and medical workers live in the bog areas.(8)

SOURCES

1. Molodoy Bol'shevik, No 6 Mar 50
2. Sovetskaya Kirgiziya, No 64, 31 May 50
3. Zarya Vostoka, No 4, 6 Jan 50
4. Pravda Vostoka, No 230, 24 Nov 49
5. Pravda, No 6, 6 Jan 50
6. Izvestiya, No 9, 11 Jan 50
7. Kommunist, No 276, 24 Nov 49
8. Izvestiya, No 8, 10 Jan 50

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